

Maastricht University graduate surveys 2015

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ROA Fact Sheet

ROA-F-2015/2

Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt | ROA
Research Centre For Education and the Labour Market | ROA

Maastricht University graduate surveys 2015

To what degree does Maastricht University succeed in preparing its students for the labour market? What are the short and medium term career paths of Maastricht University alumni, and how do they look back on their study in Maastricht? In this factsheet, the most important results of a 2014/2015 survey amongst three cohorts of Maastricht University alumni are presented. The first cohort graduated in the academic year 2012-2013 (1.5 years prior to the survey), the second cohort graduated in 2008-2009 (6 years prior to the survey) and the third cohort in the academic year 2003-2004 (11 years prior to the survey).^{1,2}

Position in the labour market

Six to eleven years after graduation, around 96% of the Maastricht university alumni have paid employment. Overall, approximately 2-3% of graduates in both cohorts reported to be out of the labour force. Important reasons for inactivity include participating in further education or taking care of children or relatives. A small percentage of graduates is looking for work. Table 1 gives a more detailed overview of graduates' unemployment rates – that is, the proportion of graduates who are currently not working but who are searching for work – by cohort and faculty. Overall, 9% of the 2012-2013 cohort is currently unemployed, while this only applies to 3% of the 2008-2009 cohort and 2% of the 2003-2004 cohort.³ The higher unemployment rate of the 2012-2013 cohort seems to be a clear reflection of the recent economic crisis, that hampers the transition from university to work.

In the 2012-2013 cohort, unemployment rates are highest among Law graduates. However, in the 2008-2009 cohort, unemployment rates are the highest among Psychology and Neuroscience graduates, while in the 2003-2004 cohort the highest rate is seen for Arts and Social Sciences graduates.⁴ We can conclude that labour market participation is higher for the 2008-2009 and 2003-2004 cohorts of Maastricht university graduates, but is considerably lower for the 2012-2013 cohort.

Table 1
Unemployment

	% unemployed		
	2012-2013	2008-2009	2003-2004
Humanities and Science	13	0	x
Business and Economics	6	1	1
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	8	2	2
Arts and Social Sciences	14	4	4
Psychology and Neuroscience	8	8	2
Law	16	3	1
Maastricht University	9	3	2

x = too few cases

Trends in unemployment

To what extent has the recent economic crisis affected labour market opportunities of Maastricht University graduates since 2008? An indication can be found in the average unemployment rate of Maastricht university graduates, as reported by the surveys that were held between 2005 and 2014. For all ten years that these surveys were conducted, unemployment information of the three cohorts is available. For the two cohorts that are 6 or 11 years on the labour market, no visible trend in unemployment rates can be detected. Thus, the most recent economic crisis does not seem to have had an influence on the unemployment rate of Maastricht University alumni 6 to 11 years into their labour market. Nevertheless, a notable increase in unemployment rates can be observed when analysing the data of alumni who graduated one year prior to the survey (see Figure 1). However, for the first time since the onset of the crisis in 2008, we can see a drop in the unemployment rate in 2014. In Appendix A, yearly employment rates are reported per faculty.⁵

¹ Of the 2012-2013 cohort, 2778 respondents were approached, of whom 22% responded. For the 2008-2009 cohort, of the 1639 alumni approached, 33% responded. Finally, for the 2003-2004 cohort, of the 1736 alumni that were approached, 36% responded.

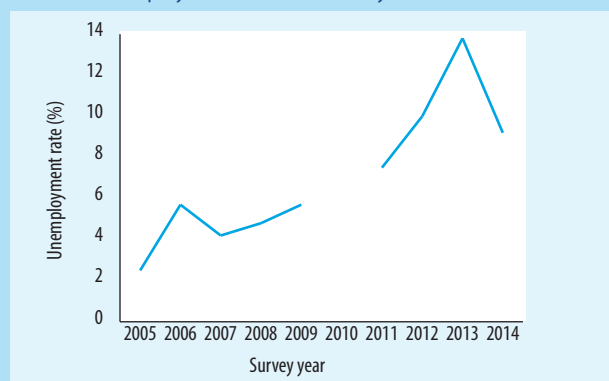
² The reader should keep in mind that the mix of studies offered by Maastricht University the respondents graduated from may vary between the three cohorts.

³ The unemployment rate might also vary within faculties. For example, in case of the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, the unemployment of Medical alumni is 3% 1.5 years after graduation, whereas for Health and Life Sciences alumni the unemployment rate among the same cohort is 10%.

⁴ It has to be noted that in the 2003-2004 cohort too few cases from Humanities and Science were available for statistical analysis.

⁵ It should be noted that compared to preceding years, in 2015 we use a slightly different definition of employment status in the surveys among alumni who graduated 6 and 11 years prior to the survey. Whereas prior to 2015 a respondent had to report a working week of at least 12 hours to be considered as employed, from 2015 onwards the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition applies, whereby all those who reported at least one hour of work are considered to be employed. In practice this makes little difference, since the vast majority of those employed are working fulltime, but it is possible that a small part of the change in unemployment in 2015 in those cohorts can be attributed to the definition change.

Figure 1
Trends in unemployment of the T+1 survey¹



¹ the T+1 survey was not administered in 2010

Job characteristics

It is important that graduates have a good match between their education and the requirements of their job, since this determines the extent to which they can use their knowledge and skills.⁶ The quality of the education-job match is positively related to job satisfaction, career opportunities, and wages. An important indicator of the quality of the fit between education and the job is the vertical match (i.e., whether graduates are working in a job that requires an academic degree). Table 2a shows the results of the vertical match between graduates' current job and their level of education, for all three cohorts.

Table 2a
Vertical match

	% working at university level or higher		
	2012-2013	2008-2009	2003-2004
Humanities and Science	96	77	x
Business and Economics	81	82	93
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	84	94	92
Arts and Social Sciences	81	66	89
Psychology and Neuroscience	75	90	95
Law	82	88	98
Maastricht University	82	85	93

x = too few cases

Table 2a clearly shows that the vast majority of graduates succeeds in finding a job at an appropriate level. However, the results of the vertical match are substantially different for the three cohorts. Among graduates from Maastricht University as a whole, the proportion of well-matched respondents decreases from 93% for the oldest cohort to 82% for the youngest cohort. Although there are some

fluctuations between the cohorts, in general we may see relatively lower proportions of well-matched graduates in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and (the youngest cohort of) the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience, and relatively high proportions in the Faculties of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences and Law.⁷ We also see a high proportion for Humanities and Science graduates in 2012-2013. This last observation is based on very small numbers however, and so should be treated with caution.

Table 2b presents numbers on the horizontal education-to-job match. This indicator measures the proportion of Maastricht University graduates who currently work in a job that requires their own or a related field of study. Again, it should be noted that most graduates succeed in finding a job in a field that well-matches their field of study. The three cohorts have different matching rates, with the results being most positive for the 2008-2009 cohort. However, we see no clear trend. Six years after graduation, 84% of the Maastricht University graduates are working in a job that matches well with their field of study, while 1,5 and 11 years after graduation, respectively 77% and 80% of the Maastricht University graduates are working in their own or a related field of study. For these two cohorts, the underlying reasons for a horizontal mismatch might differ. Shortly after graduation, a horizontal mismatch is often related to labour market conditions not allowing graduates to find a job that matches the field of study, as well as voluntary choices preferring a job in a different field. 11 years after graduation, upward job mobility often comes with more 'generic' positions not directly related to the initial field of study.

Table 2b
Horizontal match

	% working in own or related field of study		
	2012-2013	2008-2009	2003-2004
Humanities and Sciences	70	91	x
Business and Economics	77	83	82
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	85	90	83
Arts and Social Sciences	59	71	x
Psychology and Neuroscience	70	76	85
Law	80	81	80
Maastricht University	77	84	80

x = too few cases

Next to differences between the three cohorts, we may observe differences between the faculties. Overall, graduates from the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences have lower proportions of well-matched graduates. Graduates from

⁶ See for example: R. van der Velden (2011), De effecten van betrouwbaarheid van onderwijsdiploma's op arbeidsproductiviteit: toepassing van een simulatiemodel, In: J.Dronkers (ed.), Goede bedoelingen in het onderwijs: Kansen en missers, boekaflevering Mens en Maatschappij, pp 27-49.

⁷ For the Faculty of Health, Medicine and life Sciences a strong difference is again visible between Medicine (in all three cohorts 100% of the graduates are perfectly vertically matched) and Health and Life Sciences. Graduates of the latter studies are vertically matched in 71% (2012-2013), 88% (2008-2009), and 89% (2003-2004) of the cases.

Psychology and Neuroscience have relatively more difficulty finding a matching job right after graduation, but their horizontal match rate rises sharply as the career progresses. There is little systematic difference between the remaining faculties. It should be noted, however, that within the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, a strong distinction can be seen between the study of Medicine and the studies of Health and Life Sciences. Because of the very specific nature of their study, Medicine graduates show a considerably better horizontal match in all three cohorts (2012-2013: 93%, 2008-2009: 100%, 2003-2004: 98%) than the graduates of Health and Life Science studies (2012-2013: 79%, 2008-2009: 82%, 2003-2004: 76%).

Table 3
Income and working hours

	gross income per month (median)			regular working hours per week (median)		
	2012 - 2013	2008 - 2009	2003 - 2004	2012 - 2013	2008 - 2009	2003 - 2004
Humanities and Science	2.791	x	x	41	40	40
Business and Economics	3.217	5.000	6.894	44	45	45
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	2.694	3.455	4.400	37	40	36
Arts and Social Sciences	1.890	2.710	x	41	40	38
Psychology and Neuroscience	2.019	2.925	3.842	36	40	32
Law	2.458	3.850	4.900	45	40	40
Maastricht University	2.680	3.700	5.000	41	40	40

x = too few cases

Income and working hours

Table 3 shows that, as can be expected, as working experience increases, the median gross income of Maastricht University alumni increases. More specifically, 1,5 year after graduation, Maastricht University alumni have a median income of €2680 per month, while this increases to €3700 6 years after graduation and €5000 11 years after graduation. These numbers closely match the results of previous surveys. Although the income patterns across disciplines slightly differ between the different survey years, Business and Economics graduates consistently show the highest monthly earnings and Arts and Social Sciences graduates the lowest.⁸ It should be noted however, that graduates of the top income discipline (Business and Economics) also report the highest working hours, compared to graduates of the other disciplines.

⁸ The relatively low median income of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences graduates, is strongly influenced by the relatively low median income of the Health and Life Sciences studies. Medical graduates (a) have a higher starting salary and (b) are the best paid alumni 11 years after graduation, with a median income of €7.164. Due to the structure of their career paths, Medical alumni are also the group that displays the biggest income growth between six and eleven years after graduation.

Aspects of the current job

Graduates in the 2003-2004 and 2008-2009 cohorts were asked to report the extent to which they thought that their job offered job security, new challenges and career perspectives. Table 4 shows the percentage of graduates who reported that these features applied to a high or very high extent to their current job. Graduates were particularly likely to report that their job is characterized by new challenges: around three quarters of graduates in both cohorts reported that this was the case. Around two thirds reported that their jobs were characterized by a high level of job security, while a little over half of the graduates reported that the job was characterized by good career perspectives. Interestingly, although the older cohorts showed somewhat higher proportions that were satisfied with the security and challenges their jobs offered, they were slightly less satisfied with the career perspectives. It seems likely that the careers of older graduates have stabilized somewhat after a period of early growth and improvement.

Table 4
Percentage of respondents who reported that these features applied to a high or very high extent to their current job

	job security		new challenges		career perspectives	
	2008 - 2009	2003 - 2004	2008 - 2009	2003 - 2004	2008 - 2009	2003 - 2004
Humanities and Science	62	x	67	x	48	x
Business and Economics	74	64	78	80	57	54
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	56	71	81	74	61	49
Arts and Social Sciences	45	65	68	80	47	53
Psychology and Neuroscience	66	62	63	76	37	47
Law	80	74	70	73	54	52
Maastricht University	63	68	75	77	55	51

x = too few cases

The differences between faculties are quite small for the older cohort. There are larger differences for the graduates who were approached 6 years after graduation. Law and Business and Economics graduates in this cohort enjoy a relatively high level of job security, whereas this applies to less than half of their Arts and Social Sciences peers. Graduates from Health, Medicine and Life Sciences and Business and Economics are relatively likely to report a high level of new challenges, as well as relatively good career perspectives. Graduates from the 2008-2009 cohort in the Faculties of Psychology and Neuroscience, Humanities and Science and Arts and Social Sciences score relatively low on these aspects.

International orientation of Maastricht University and its graduates

It appears that the international orientation of Maastricht University and the fact that English is the main language

of instruction in many study programs continue to attract increasing numbers of international students for all faculties. It is interesting to see whether this international orientation is extended beyond the time of the study in Maastricht, in the form of high percentages of graduates working abroad. Table 5 shows the percentage of Maastricht University alumni of the various cohorts currently working inside and outside the Netherlands, split by faculty. For Maastricht as a whole, 46% of the alumni of 2012-2013 cohort is working abroad, while the same applies to 34% of the alumni of the 2008-2009 cohort and 21% of the alumni of the 2003-2004 cohort. These numbers include foreign students who returned to their home country after graduation.

Considerable variation exists between the faculties. Graduates of the Arts and Social Sciences and Humanities and Science Faculties are particularly internationally active, while for Law and especially Health, Medicine and Life Sciences graduates' international mobility is relatively rare. The pattern of diminished mobility for the older cohorts can be seen in all faculties, despite the large differences in the absolute level of international mobility.

Table 5

Percentage of alumni working abroad and percentage feeling that their UM programme offered a good basis for a career in an international labour market

	2012-2013		2008-2009		2003-2004	
	working abroad	good basis	working abroad	good basis	working abroad	good basis
Humanities and Science	82	-	64	86	x	x
Business and Economics	61	-	47	79	38	76
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	16	-	13	32	10	25
Arts and Social Sciences	69	-	65	64	32	24
Psychology and Neuroscience	42	-	51	47	19	29
Law	46	-	22	43	10	29
Maastricht University	46	-	34	52	21	43

x = too few cases

To what extent do alumni feel that the study programme at Maastricht University offered them a good basis for a career in an international labour market? In total, 52% of the 2008-2009 and 43% of the 2003-2004 cohort responded that this applied to a high or very high extent. There are large differences between faculties, which broadly correspond with the differences in the proportions working abroad. Graduates from the older cohort are generally less likely to assess that their study provided a good basis for an international career. This could indicate that graduates base their assessment on their own experiences, or alternatively, that the university as a whole has become better at preparing students for an international career. There may be support for this latter interpretation in the fact that graduates of the School of Business and Economics - with its established

tradition of an internationally oriented education - are relatively positive about this aspect, and remain positive long after graduation, despite having only the third highest prevalence of working abroad. It may be that the other faculties are beginning to reduce the gap with SBE in this respect.

Satisfaction with Maastricht University

Finally, alumni were asked how they looked back on their study at Maastricht University and to assess what choices they would make in retrospect. With the benefit of hindsight, would graduates choose the same study at the same university again? In the 2012-2013 cohort, 78% of the alumni would again choose the exact same study at Maastricht University. For the cohorts that graduated in 2008-2009 and 2003-2004, these figures were 80% and 71%, respectively. Table 6 presents the survey results for the three cohorts per faculty.⁹

Table 6

Percentage of alumni who would again choose the exact same study at Maastricht University

	2012-2013	2008-2009	2003-2004
Humanities and Science	84	86	x
Business and Economics	84	85	75
Health, Medicine and Life Sciences	75	85	73
Arts and Social Sciences	72	75	67
Psychology and Neuroscience	72	58	67
Law	80	74	60
Maastricht University	78	80	71

In general graduates from the Faculties of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Business and Economics and Humanities and Science are most often satisfied with their initial choice. Relatively less satisfied were graduates from Psychology and Neuroscience and Arts and Social Sciences.

⁹ Within the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, graduates of the Medical studies are significantly more satisfied with their study choice in retrospect. For example, in the 2003-2004 cohort, 75% of the graduates of Health and Life Sciences would again choose the same study at Maastricht university compared to 90% of the Medical graduates.

Appendix A

Table 7
Trends in unemployment^{1,2}

	2009 T+1 2007-2008	2010 T+1 2008-2009	2011 T+1 2009-2010	2012 T+1 2010-2011	2013 T+1 2011-2012	2014 T+1 2012-2013	2015 T+1 2013-2014
Business and Economics	5,7	-	4,9	6,0	6,3	5,7	-
Health and Life Sciences	0,0	-	4,4	8,3	16,4	10,3	-
Medicine	0,0	-	0,0	1,7	2,5	3,3	-
Arts and Social Sciences	18,5	-	23,9	25,5	33,3	13,7	-
Psychology and Neuroscience	6,1	-	11,4	16,7	25,6	7,6	-
Law	6,0	-	8,8	7,1	14,3	16,2	-
Maastricht University	5,7	-	7,5	10,0	13,8	9,2	-
	2009 T+5 2002-2003	2010 T+5 2003-2004	2011 T+5 2004-2005	2012 T+5 2005-2006	2013 T+5 2006-2007	2014 T+5 2007-2008	2015 T+5 2008-2009
Business and Economics	3,2	2,2	5,4	1,9	0,0	0,0	0,9
Health and Life Sciences	2,4	1,7	2,7	2,1	3,1	3,5	4,3
Medicine	0,0	0,0	1,5	0,0	0,0	1,3	0,0
Arts and Social Sciences	x	x	3,8	10,1	5,7	4,8	4,4
Psychology and Neuroscience	1,9	7,0	10,3	4,2	0,0	4,3	7,5
Law	1,2	4,3	5,0	0,0	6,8	3,8	2,6
Maastricht University	2,3	2,5	4,4	2,7	3,2	2,6	2,6
	2009 T+10 1997-1998	2010 T+10 1998-1999	2011 T+10 1999-2000	2012 T+10 2000-2001	2013 T+10 2001-2002	2014 T+10 2002-2003	2015 T+10 2003-2004
Business and Economics	0,0	3,0	2,8	0,9	0,9	0,7	1,0
Health and Life Sciences	0,6	0,6	2,0	1,2	3,1	3,7	0,6
Medicine	0,0	0,0	2,6	1,8	0,0	2,0	3,6
Arts and Social Sciences	x	x	x	x	x	x	4,3
Psychology and Neuroscience	0,0	0,0	0,0	3,8	0,0	4,9	2,0
Law	0,0	1,5	0,0	6,1	1,6	0,0	1,4
Maastricht University	0,3	1,7	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,1	1,5

¹ = too little information on the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences

² = It should be noted that a slightly different definition of employment status was used in the T+5 and T+10 surveys in 2015 than in the preceding years. Whereas prior to 2015 a respondent had to report a working week of at least 12 hours to be considered as employed, from 2015 onwards the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition applies, whereby all those who reported at least one hour of work are considered to be employed. In practice this makes little difference, since the vast majority of those employed are working fulltime, but it is possible that a small part of the change in unemployment in 2015 in those cohorts can be attributed to the definition change.

x = too few cases

- = the T+1 survey was not administered in 2010 and still has to be administered in 2015

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